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AUTHOR Seaman, Don F.; Cuellar, Sylvia
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ABSTRACT

The Houston Community College (Texas) program (TOTAL ACCESS) designed in response to the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, is described and evaluated. The program offers classes to eligible aliens (97% Hispanic Americans from Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala) wishing to pursue the educational program required for legalization. Program components include English as a Second Language and citizenship instruction, basic literacy, and high school equivalency. This report describes the curriculum; the need for and nature of the program; initial evaluation activities; evaluation data (including enrollment, effect on television viewing for literacy, and use of the local newspaper for literacy lessons); attainment of specific program objectives; student demographic data (previous place of residence, age, birthplace, gender, length of residence in Houston, occupations, marital status, children, educational background); teacher data (background, credentials); student values, goals, and expectations; and inservice staff development. Summary observations of the program and recommendations for improvement are also included. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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EVALUATION OF

THE HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE ELIGIBLE LEGALIZED ALIEN PROGRAM

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TEXAS CENTER FOR ADULT LITERACY AND LEARNING

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

FORWARD

This evaluation report is the result of a contractual agreement between Houston Community College, Assured Learning Centers of America, Inc., and the Texas Center for Adult Literacy and Learning (TCALL), College of Education, Texas A&M University. In the agreement, the staff of TCALL agreed to evaluate the implementation of the TOTAL ACCESS program, with particular focus upon the influence of the program to recruit and retain eligible legalized alien (ELA) students in Houston. Few judgments are provided about the components of the curriculum because that was not the focus of this project. It was assumed that the staffs of both Houston Community College and Assured Learning Centers of America, Inc., had made the curricular choices from their own evaluation activities and research data, and the contractual agreement was for the TCALL staff to focus upon the effects of the program. Biographical data were collected for purposes of comparing characteristics of this population with those of students in other adult literacy programs. Data from both students and teachers were obtained to ascertain their perceptions about the quality and/or effects of the program.

This was Stage I of a proposed three-stage project, with accompanying evaluations. More in-depth measures are proposed for Stages II and III, including affective as well as cognitive data acquisition.

The evaluation staff are particularly grateful to Dr. Monroe Neff and Mrs. Patti Carlton of the Division of Adult and

Continuing Education, Houston Community College, and to Dr. Billy Reagan and Dr. Pat Sturdivant, Assured Learning Centers of America, Inc., for their assistance in this endeavor. Thanks are also due to the individuals from Literacy Advance of Houston for conducting the interviews.

INTRODUCTION

Adult literacy programs involve many different people in a variety of contexts, i.e., learners, teachers, program administrators, funding agency staff, and others. One of the important aspects of programming is evaluation: has the program really made a difference, and if so, in what way? Unfortunately, as Grotelueschen, et. al.(1974) indicate, too often, evaluations answer questions which nobody is asking and avoid responding to those questions which are really important. Therefore, one of the crucial aspects of conducting evaluations is to develop a proper framework within which to address those important questions that readers of such reports will ask.

The conceptual framework which seems most appropriate for adult education is that advocated by Steele (1990) which consists of the following components:

(1). What will be the usefulness of the evaluation? Will it benefit individuals with multiple perspectives, e.g., students, teachers, administrators, etc.?

(2). Does the evaluation process include a variety of methods or is it limited to a somewhat more narrow set of activities?

(3). Does the evaluation process reflect adult education philosophy or does it follow more traditional approaches?

(4). Is there a specific focus for the evaluation, i.e., measurement, accountability, experimentation, etc.?

Steele (1990) further indicates that in focusing the evaluation, there are four major approaches which are different, but which are not mutually exclusive. None is any better than another and all should be utilized as much as possible in a complete evaluation system. They are:

(1). Proof of effect;
(2). Judgment against criteria;
(3). Critical questions; and
(4). Valuing (p.268).

Therefore, this evaluation report has been developed within the four criteria indicated above because this framework is sufficiently flexible for the evaluation of a **developing program** which was the nature of the TOTAL ACCESS program. This **developing** status will be further explained in the next section of this report.

AMNESTY PROGRAMS AT HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

In 1986, the U.S. Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act which requires applicants for legalization to pursue acquisition of ordinary English plus knowledge of our nation's history and government. Houston Community College (HCC) was approved through the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to offer classes for those individuals in Houston who wished to pursue the INS certificate program of 40 contact hours. Classes began during the 1987-88 fiscal year and have continued for the two succeeding years.

Assured Learning Centers of America, Inc.

In August, 1989, HCC entered into an agreement with Assured Learning Centers of America, Inc. (ALCA), through which ALCA would provide a "TOTAL ACCESS" literacy program and related services for the Eligible Legalized Alien (ELA) program conducted by the college staff.

In the agreement with HCC, ALCA was responsible for the following:

(1). Installing 200 multi-level learning units at no more than 100 sites. Each learning unit would consist of one Hi-Fi VCR, one 25-inch color monitor, one lockable viewing/storage center and one listening station;

(2). Providing comprehensive video-based curricular materials with accompanying texts and teacher-support materials that could be integrated into the ELA instructional program in the following stages:

Stage 1: ESL and Citizenship
Stage 2: Basic Literacy
Stage 3: High School Equivalency

(3). Providing and installing the needed equipment, including the learning units, for the adult learning centers;

(4). Allowing HCC to make whatever copies of the material delivered for internal use and for the classes;

(5). Allowing HCC to duplicate for its institutional contacts the videotapes for a two-year period while maintaining appropriate documentation as to sites and use;

(6). Facilitating the broadcasting of the video programs through at least one major television station;

(7). Conveying newspaper publication rights which would enable mass distribution of home study guides and curriculum materials in conjunction with the HOUSTON CHRONICLE'S "Newspapers in Education" program;

(8). Providing training materials and 240 hours of teacher inservice in the initial funding year and thereafter make reasonable consulting assistance available upon request at no charge; and

(9). Supporting HCC's implementation and evaluation efforts by providing research and evaluation reports and implementation plans for improved decision making, program evaluation and accountability.

The Curriculum (Opportunity USA)

The curriculum used in the HCC TOTAL ACCESS Program, Opportunity USA, consists of over 60 hours of audio- and video-based instruction combined with worksheets for independent as well as classroom use. This curriculum was developed by English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) professionals in California, and all teachers seen and/or heard in the tapes are "real" teachers employed in the Los Angeles public schools or area community colleges. The video tapes were produced in live classrooms, and although their emphasis is with group instruction, all of the curriculum components can be utilized for individualized learning activities, even on a take-home basis.

The curriculum developers opted for a video-based delivery system for the following reasons:

(1). Tens of thousands of illegal aliens were provided a limited time-frame to achieve permanent residency status. This created the need for a program/curriculum which would enable students to acquire knowledge/skills in a timely manner;

(2). Because of limited classroom space in often inconvenient places, unmanageable class sizes, and sporadic attendance due to a myriad of barriers, e.g., family concerns, holding more than one job, etc., students often need to be able to study at home. Since more and more people are buying video tape players, this seemed to be a logical direction for developing curriculum materials for this audience; and

(3). The video-based material is self-paced, provides opportunity for review, and utilizes a variety of settings and qualified ESL instructors. Through video, "friendly hosts" can introduce the lessons while reducing the fear which usually accompanies adult literacy students, particularly those with a different language and cultural background. (Source:

Opportunity USA. Houston: Assured Learning Centers of America, Inc.)

Need for the Program in Houston

Nobody knows how many illegal aliens live in metropolitan Houston, although most estimates range from 75,000 to 200,000 (Sallee, 1990). Hispanic immigrants are attracted to a city with a growing economy and since 1990, while Houston's population has grown by about 50% each decade, the Hispanic population has **doubled** every 10 years, and that group is probably the largest minority in Houston. More importantly, ..."if the immigration and high birthrates that underlie this growth continue, Anglos will become a minority in Harris County in about 15 years, and Hispanics the largest ethnic group in about 30" (Sallee, 1990, p. 1C). However, this growth, especially in the past decade, has created demands which social and educational agencies have been unable to meet. In order to obtain and hold gainful employment, adults must be able to not only communicate in both oral and written forms, but must also be free from the fear of being "discovered" and returned to their homeland. Through a comprehensive educational program which provides not only the needed content but also the encouragement to participate and learn, the needs of at least part of the target population can be met.

Hispanics are going to play important roles in the entire fabric which constitutes everyday life in Houston in the future, i.e., the workplace, education, law enforcement, family and community life, politics, etc. (Hunt, 1990). At present (1990), many Spanish-speaking residents suffer from a lack of accessibility to needed social services and as a result, not only do individual families suffer, so does the entire community. In many cases, cultural factors inhibit non-citizen Hispanics from taking advantage of educational opportunities, e.g., fear of anyone representing authority or official agencies, distrust, dependency upon home remedies and solutions, etc. "There are going to be more and more problems...Certainly we have to fill the needs that are there, but we need to look at preventive programs...If we can give them services that teach them skills and the knowledge they need, we'll go a long way toward solving the problems of the future..."(Hunt, p.10A).

Nature of the TOTAL ACCESS Project

When initially contacted about evaluating the TOTAL ACCESS ELA Program for HCC and ALCA, the staff of the Texas Center for Adult Literacy and Learning (TCALL) had mixed feelings because of the nature of the project, especially the following program characteristics:

(1). The project would be "evolving" in several definite "stages" during the evaluation period. That makes evaluation exciting, but also adds to the difficulty of the task because the criteria against which to evaluate findings usually are also evolving as the project proceeds;

(2). Through participating in other literacy efforts, TCALL staff were aware of the difficulty of obtaining objective data from individuals who have limited English proficiency. However, the great need for these kinds of data also made the project very attractive; and

(3). Although working with organizations some distance from the institutional base is often difficult, knowing the quality of the staff of the other organizations involved with this project and their dependability added to the desirability of participating.

Initial Evaluation Activities

The original plan was to initiate the project in September, 1989. However, as is the nature of new endeavors, several delays caused the actual schedule of the project to be November 1, 1989, through May 15, 1990. But, due to some fewer expenditures than had been anticipated, the TCALL staff were able to extend the evaluation project period for "Stage 1" until July 31, 1990, at no additional cost over the original budgeted amount. This was, of course, with the approval of both HCC and ALCA.

Several meetings were held between/among staff members of the three principal organizations - Houston Community College (HCC), Assured Learning Centers of America, Inc., (ALCA) and TCALL. Once the three groups felt that the nature of the evaluation was understood by all parties, the project activities began. They will be discussed within the parameters of the evaluation criteria and the findings from "Stage 1". However, the main components of the TOTAL ACCESS program consisted of the following:

(1). Utilization of a "student-centered, whole language philosophy" supported by specific content within a curriculum entitled, Opportunity USA, e.g., oral English, and American History and Government;

(2). Employment of an extensive outreach program. Thousands of brochures, pens, and fliers have been distributed during festivals, celebrations, presentations to interested groups, and through a major food-store chain in the Houston area;

(3). Offering of classes throughout the metropolitan area. Instruction was provided at HCC sites and through 10 agencies

which subcontracted with the HCC system, including religious organizations, SER-Jobs for Progress, universities, YMCA, and the Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans (AAMA); and

(4). Experimentation with a multi-media approach, concentrating primarily on radio, television, and the newspaper. Results from those projects are discussed later.

PROOF OF EFFECT

"Proof of Effect" refers to the idea that results are caused by program activities instead of by chance or by some other criterion. This is often determined through careful research procedures such as experimental and control groups or through other procedures where nothing is changed from previous or other concurrent activities except for the introduction of one new element or task. In the case of the TOTAL ACCESS program, there are several activities to be discussed.

(1). Enrollment in the Program

Enrollment in the TOTAL ACCESS program during 1989-1990 has shown a substantial increase from 1988-1989. Based upon projections from enrollment figures as of May, 1990, the enrollment should show an increase of approximately 26.7% over the previous year. This figure was derived by comparing the enrollment of 23,842 persons for all of 1988-1989 (October 1, 1988 - September 30, 1989) to an enrollment of 20,129 for the period, October 1, 1989 - May 31, 1990, and projecting the same level of enrollment for the remainder of the fiscal year (see Table 1 on next page).

As seen in Table 1, enrollment in the HCC ELA Program has shown a marked increase during the past year in contrast to enrollment in the state, which is almost the same as the previous year. Since the only change in recruitment activities between the two years has been the involvement of the TOTAL ACCESS program, the effect of that program is apparently significant. **Although the reader must understand that all other influences (whatever they be) could not be entirely controlled in this community-wide situation, the evaluation team is satisfied that the TOTAL ACCESS program recruitment activities played a significant role in the increase in enrollment in the HCC ELA Program for 1989-1990.**

(2). Effect on Television Viewing for Literacy Lessons

One of the major parts of the TOTAL ACCESS media approach was the offering of literacy lessons on Pueblo Broadcasting Corporation - KXLN, Channel 45 - a commercial, Spanish-speaking

television station. Therefore, measuring the "effect" of that project must include the data about the Arbitron rating related to the broadcasting of the video tapes over Channel 45.

TABLE 1

COMPARISON OF ENROLLMENT IN THE HCC ELA PROGRAM FOR 1988-1989 WITH PROJECTED ENROLLMENT FOR 1989-1990 BASED ON FIGURES AS OF MAY, 1990

	1988-1989	1989-1990	%Change
Houston Comm. College	23,842	30,194*	+26.7
Texas	147,000	145,000**	-1.0

*projected from total enrollment on May 31, 1990
**estimated from enrollment on March 31, 1990, by Dr. Pavlos Roussos, Texas Education Agency

The tapes were aired each morning from 6:30-7:00 A.M., for a period of several weeks. According to data acquired from the staff at Channel 45, before the program began, the Arbitron rating for that time period was almost zero, indicating that virtually nobody was viewing that channel at that time of day. **By the fourth week of the TOTAL ACCESS experimental project, the rating had increased from 0 to 1.0, indicating that approximately 20,000 persons were viewing the literacy program**, as indicated by Zanetta Kelly, director of marketing, KLXN, TV. However, according to Gary Metcalfe of KTMD Channel 48, another commercial Spanish-speaking television station, one arbitron rating is closer to 15,000 than 20,000. Regardless of the number, the fact that the increased ratings correlated with the airing of the tapes indicated that the tapes did attract viewers who were seeking to learn English.

The ratings had slipped somewhat during the third week of broadcasting, but recovered during the fourth and fifth weeks. Ms. Kelly stated that the loss of viewership during the third week is normal with any new program, but she also attributed the gain in the Arbitron rating during that morning time slot solely to the TOTAL ACCESS program which was assisted by twelve "spots" per day in promotional airtime. Ms. Kelly also felt that the program performed "moderately" and that viewership could possibly be increased with "extra promotion to support a strong television campaign". She was most supportive of the project and felt that the potential for even greater results was probable since part of the target audience was now aware of the possibility of viewing lessons via television.

The reader must also consider these data while understanding the difficulty and uniqueness of reaching people with educational programs through television, particularly adults with low literacy levels. In Table 5 of this report, the data indicate that 55% of the students interviewed had attended school for six or fewer years. While not even speculating about the quality of the education, it would be difficult to interest that audience in any kind of educational endeavor via television. This was confirmed through a conversation with the director of public television - Channel 8 - in Houston. **In spite of those handicaps, the HCC TOTAL ACCESS program was able to attract and hold almost 15,000 to 20,000 viewers during the time the experimental program was aired over a commercial television channel.**

(3). Use of the Newspaper in Education

Another part of the media experiment of the TOTAL ACCESS program was the offering of literacy lessons through the Houston Chronicle, a daily newspaper whose staff has a strong commitment to literacy through support of many related activities in Houston. Mrs. Linda Kleemen, Manager, Educational Services, shared the findings of the staff who monitored circulation figures during the time the newspaper contained literacy lessons. After discounting for regular increases during the fall season, circulation figures showed increases of 926 daily newspapers during the time the lessons were presented. In Mrs. Kleeman's opinion, virtually all of that increase can be attributed solely to the TOTAL ACCESS adult literacy program. When the lessons were discontinued, circulation dropped to what was ordinarily expected.

JUDGMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

"Judgment against criteria" is one of the most commonly used procedures in evaluation. It compares "what is" with what was planned, or what "should be", as determined by some kind of goal(s) or objective(s). Certain levels of expectations are set and the outcomes are compared against them.

Objectives of the HCC ELA Program.

The following objectives were established for the HCC TOTAL ACCESS program for 1989-1990. Each is discussed in terms of accomplishments or shortcomings.

(1). To maintain strong partnerships with those agencies that are serving the legalized alien population cooperatively with HCC. This objective was met through agreements with ten

cooperating centers. This arrangement enables the HCC TOTAL ACCESS program to be accessible to many students through those cooperating centers which choose to participate in the program.

(2). To offer classes at easily accessible locations in order to meet ELA educational needs through INS-approved course levels in ESL and U.S. History and Government. Through the TOTAL ACCESS program, classes have been offered in approximately 90 sites in Houston. Accessibility has been met to the extent that resources would allow for this fiscal year. However, not all sites were furnished with the video equipment and tapes due to resource limitations.

(3). To revise and update a basic life-coping skills curriculum that will address the survival needs of ELA's and prepare them for the INS examination. With the adoption of Opportunity U.S.A., a curriculum has been provided during the past year. One of the measures of the quality of that curriculum is its "holding power", i.e., how many of the legalized aliens return to class after the forty-hour certificate has been achieved? **Since records indicate that slightly over 41% of the certificate completers have attended classes beyond that minimum requirement** (data provided by HCC staff), **the curriculum must be judged as being very effective in terms of encouraging students to continue their studies.**

(4). To provide students in all levels of ELA classes with a solid foundation in English, basic American History and principles of U.S. Government commensurate with the levels of English and literacy proficiency with 80% mastery. During the past year, **more than 80%** of those who enrolled in the HCC TOTAL ACCESS Program completed the INS certificate program. However, indications of mastery of the content were not reported to the evaluation project staff.

(5). To continue to increase community, public and private sector awareness of educational efforts for ELA's. With the addition of the utilization of the newspaper and television lessons, plus the distribution of brochures through a major food-store chain, the publicity fostered an increased need for educational programs for ELA's. Furthermore, the efforts to meet those needs were distributed throughout the community.

(6). To provide updated information to staff through the monthly Adult Education Newsletter, workshop and training sessions, and other means in order for staff and faculty to effectively instruct and counsel ELA's involved in Legalization. Staff are regularly informed about all aspects of the HCC TOTAL ACCESS program, changes in INS rulings, changes in curriculum, and other valuable information through staff development sessions. Staff development is discussed more in-depth later in this report, but observations by the evaluation staff indicated

that pertinent information was made available at those sessions. Data indicate that the monthly newsletter was not developed.

(7). To develop and incorporate the Total Access Literacy component to provide a multi-level instructional learning system (k-12) for adults. As indicated previously, the curriculum, OPPORTUNITY USA, is multi-level and self-paced, designed for ESL and citizenship learning. As indicated in No. 8 below, it has been effective in retaining students beyond the INS forty-hour certificate program.

(8). To offer classes in ABE and GED to meet ELA educational needs. Students are continuing in the program beyond certificate-required attendance. For the past year, 3,676 were enrolled in ESL classes, 865 in adult basic education, and 180 in GED classes (HCC data).

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Critical questions are those which the primary stakeholders, i.e., teachers, students, administrators, etc., are inclined to ask about a program. However, this aspect of evaluation is more dynamic because the questions keep changing (Steele, 1990).

Student Demographic Data

Since students constitute the most important persons in an adult literacy program, an attempt was made to acquire data about them. A group of bilingual advanced students in a privately-funded adult literacy program in Houston was trained to interview students in the TOTAL ACCESS program. Interviews were conducted before and after classes to avoid interfering with student access to and participation in class work. Mostly biographic and attitudinal data were collected and are reported below. Although the interview sites were not randomly selected, the evaluation staff feel the students were representative of all students in the program.

Birthplace. Ten years ago, census officials estimated that 88% of Houston area Hispanics were of Mexican decent. However, this figure has been driven downward by immigration prompted by conflict in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. Today, sociologists estimate that about 75% of area Hispanics are from Mexico and 12% from El Salvador (Sallee, 1990). The figures from the evaluation interviews are similar. As seen in Figure 1 on the following page, most of the students enrolled in the TOTAL ACCESS Program were born in Mexico (74%), although many were also from El Salvador (18%). A number of other Spanish-speaking countries represent virtually all other remaining countries.

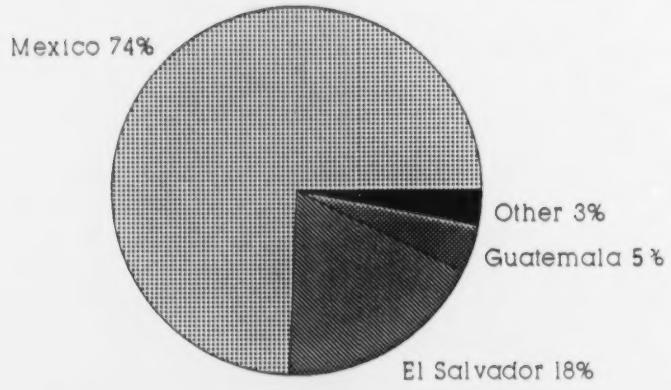

FIGURE 1. Country of Birth of Students Enrolled in the HCC TOTAL ACCESS Program

Previous Location. Although nearly three-fourths of the students were born in Mexico, that does not mean that all of them came directly to Houston from that country. The staff was interested in learning from where the students had migrated. This could be meaningful in planning for future programs and classes. Those data are reported in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Previous Location of Students Enrolled in the HCC TOTAL ACCESS Program

PREVIOUS LOCATION	PERCENT
Mexico	58
Other Foreign Country	21
Other U.S. State	8
Other Texas Site	8
Unknown	5

Age and Birthplace. Besides birthplace, the ages of the students are an important variable to consider when planning schedules and locations of classes. The students in the HCC TOTAL ACCESS program are, in general, representative of the somewhat younger age groups being served by adult literacy programs in the U.S. As seen in Table 3, 45% of those born in

Mexico are 16-29 years of age, 38% are 30-39 years, 13% are 40-49 years, and 4% are 50 years and older.

TABLE 3

Age and Birthplace of Students Enrolled in the HCC TOTAL ACCESS Program

Country of Origin	Age in Years			
	16-29	30-39	40-49	50+
Mexico	45%	38%	13%	4%
ElSalvador	37%	43%	14%	6%
Other	46%	43%	8%	3%

Gender. Much of the literature about adult literacy indicates that it is predominately a "female" program. However, data in Table 4 indicate that those students in the HCC TOTAL ACCESS program do not follow that pattern. The majority of the students interviewed were males and this also is reflected by the types of jobs they hold as indicated in Figure 2 and the related discussion.

Number of years Lived in Houston. One of the factors which verifies the need for the TOTAL ACCESS program is also found in Table 4. **Of the students interviewed (191), 93% had lived in Houston more than four years, and 64% had lived there more than eight years. The fact that these people had lived in this city for that many years and had not learned to speak English nor had attained basic literacy skills indicates a great need for a program which will attract and retain this population in a basic adult literacy program. The HCC TOTAL ACCESS program is filling that need.**

TABLE 4

Gender and Number of Years HCC TOTAL ACCESS Students Have Lived in Houston

Gender	Number of Years Lived in Houston (n=191)					
	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	16+	Total
Female	4	25	47	3	2	81
Male	9	30	55	14	2	110

Student Occupations. Most of the students interviewed (84%) were employed and they were working in a wide variety of jobs and occupations. Figure 2 shows the categories containing the largest numbers of workers, but the category, "others", contained 36% of the total. Included in that category were: day care worker, day laborer,welder, printer machinist, truck driver, laundry worker, antique restorer, clothing service employee, auto body shop worker, car rental service employee, stocker, mechanic, babysitter, metal worker, salesperson, factory worker, bartender, plumber, garden service worker, delivery person, and advertising service employee. As the reader can realize, these students were employed almost everywhere in mostly low-wage occupations.

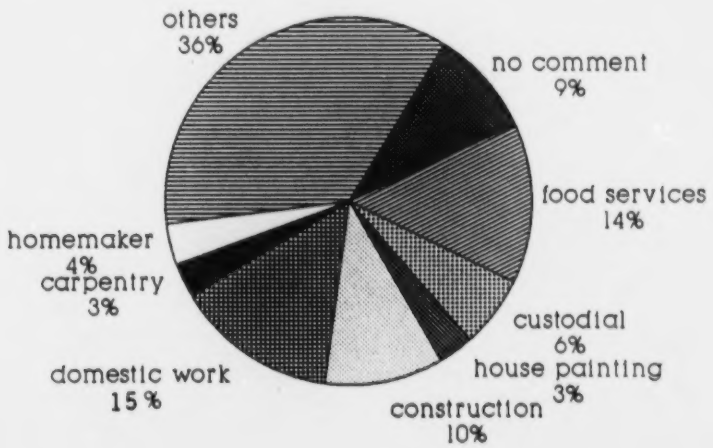

FIGURE 2. Occupations Held by Students Enrolled in the HCC TOTAL ACCESS Program

Marital Status and Number of Children. In much of the

literature about adult literacy, single parent families are mentioned as dominating the target audience. Therefore, data about marital status and number of children at home were obtained. Results of the student survey showed that 51% of the students are married, while 46% are single. Three percent did not respond. As illustrated in Figure 3, of the married students surveyed, 8% have no children, 70% have from one to three children, and 22% have four or more children. Results of the single students surveyed indicate that 50% have no children, 36% have from one to three children, and 8% have four or more children. Six percent of the students did not respond to this question. Thus, students in the TOTAL ACCESS program are not representative of previous literature. Perhaps this is due to the younger age of these students, plus some cultural factors not explored in this study, e.g., religion, family values, etc.

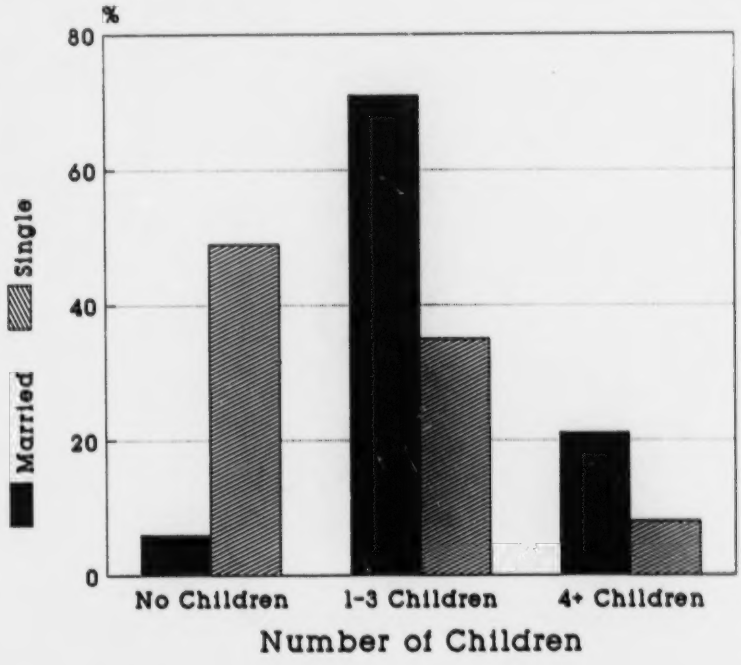

FIGURE 3. Marital Status and Number of Children of Students Enrolled in the HCC TOTAL ACCESS Program

Educational Background. In planning an adult literacy program, knowledge of the previous educational attainment of the students is quite important even if the quality of that education cannot be assessed accurately. That information is reported in Table 5. Those data, when accompanied with some kind of local program assessment, can be helpful for accurate placement of the students in the program. In addition, this procedure allows the

program staff to develop local norms for assessing future students who have similar educational backgrounds.

TABLE 5

Educational Attainment of Students Enrolled in the HCC TOTAL ACCESS Program

YEARS COMPLETED	PERCENT
0	5
1-3	17
4-6	33
7-9	25
10-12	15
12+	5

Teacher Data

Teachers are perceived as role models, sources of information, facilitators, and sometimes, counselors for all kinds of problems which immigrants possess. Data from teachers were obtained during two staff development workshops. Again, this was not a random sample and its representativeness is not known. All teachers attending two randomly-selected workshops responded to the questionnaire.

Teacher Background. Ethnicity and gender are identifying factors in the selection of role models by students. Completed questionnaires revealed that 62% of the teachers were female while 38% were male. The predominate ethnic group was Hispanic, followed by Anglo, Afro-American, and Oriental. Figure 4 displays this information.

Teacher Credentials. Employing sufficient numbers of qualified teachers for a large program is a difficult task. Add to that the short start-up time limitation and one must wonder how this task was accomplished. The evaluation staff asked everyone who was in attendance at the staff development workshops which they attended to indicate their highest education level. Not all were teachers because some were aides, while others were participating in hope of attaining employment. Of those teachers attending, 28% had completed graduate school and all others held a bachelor's degree. In addition, the majority had completed one year of teaching in the Amnesty program.

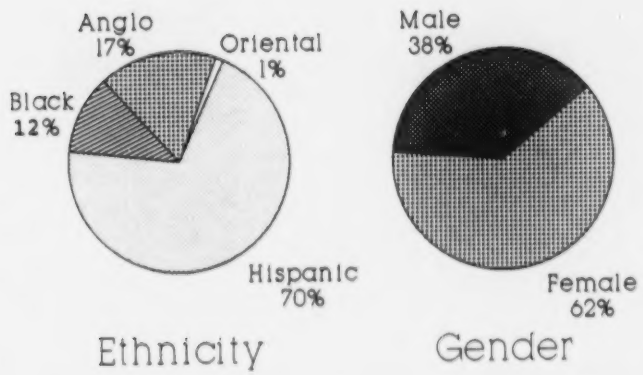

FIGURE 4. Gender/Ethnic Background of Teachers in the HCC TOTAL ACCESS Program

VALUING

Even though most educational evaluators define the term **evaluation** as determining worth, valuing is the least used of the four concepts. Although different people value the same thing differently, it is important to know how valuable participants perceive a program to be to themselves and potentially, to others. This is a basic tenet for all adult educators when assessing the quality and worth of their programs.

Why Did Students Move to Houston (or the U.S.)? People usually value the place where they live and adult literacy students should be no different. The United States has, for many years,

FIGURE 5. Why Students Enrolled in the HCC TOTAL ACCESS Program moved to Houston.

been perceived as a land of opportunity and the data for the HCC TOTAL ACCESS students show this to still be the case. Although the they moved to Houston for many reasons, they were primarily seeking a better future (43%) and better employment opportunities (36%). Many were trying to escape the civil war in El Salvador while others liked the size and location of Houston where they hoped to obtain a better education and be with their family. Figure 5 demonstrates those findings.

Student Learning Goals. An assessment of student learning needs usually provides valuable information for program planners and coordinators in developing and improving their programs. When students were asked why they were taking classes, 48% responded that they were seeking amnesty. Table 6 lists their responses.

TABLE 6

Reasons HCC TOTAL ACCESS Students Were Enrolled in Classes

REASON FOR ENROLLING	PERCENT
To seek Amnesty	48
To learn English	38
To continue my education	10
Other	4

Desirability for a Bilingual Teacher. Professionals in the area of Bilingual Education or English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) may differ in their responses to the question, "Should the teacher in an amnesty class be bilingual"? When the HCC TOTAL ACCESS program students were asked if they prefer a bilingual teacher, most responded, "yes". Their value for this concept was high, and the evaluation staff members were gratified to learn that most of the teachers included in the interview sample were bilingual. However, when these two factors were compared while controlling for the educational level of the students, the importance of having a bilingual teacher diminished somewhat when a student had a higher educational background. Figure 6 displays that slight trend.

Favorite Teacher Activity. Much of the adult education literature indicates that students will learn better if they feel comfortable with their teacher. HCC TOTAL ACCESS students responded overwhelmingly positively toward their teachers (99%).

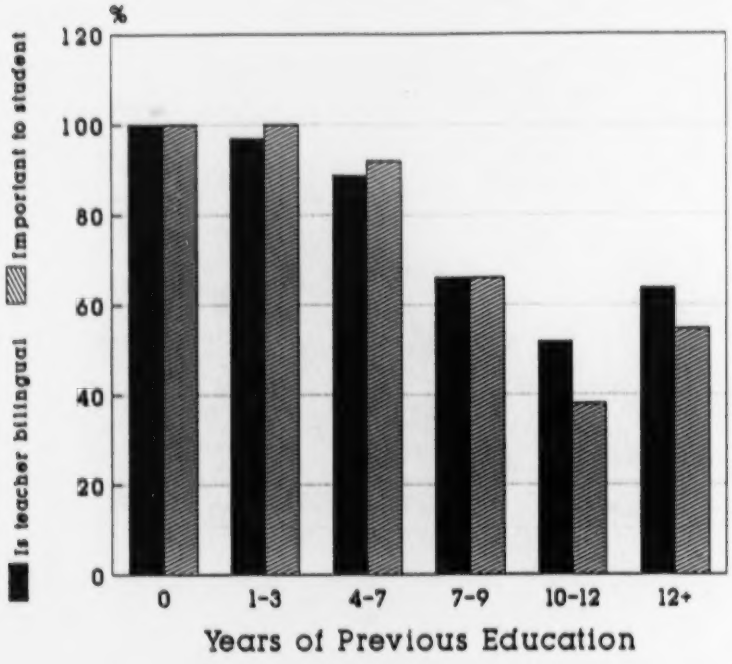

FIGURE 6. Preference for Bilingual Teachers of Students Enrolled in the HCC TOTAL ACCESS Program

When asked what their teachers did that they liked best, some students described teacher attributes, while others described teacher activities. Over one third emphasized their teachers' patience when explaining their lessons. Figure 7 shows the categories with the most responses. However, included in the "other" category were: attention to students, repeats lessons, uses the dictionary, corrects our errors, gives us confidence, teaches pronunciation, teaches history and politics, brings handouts to explain better, and teaches grammar.

Improving the Classes. In order to acquire input for program improvement, students were asked to suggest anything which they felt would make the classes/program better. Most indicated that they were quite satisfied with the program as it was, but some did provide some suggestions:

Practice English more.
Use more interesting books.
Have longer classes.
Schedule more exams.
Meet program graduates.
Use newspapers more often.
Hold classes every day.
Have more videotape lessons.
Use more advanced books.
The teacher should correct bad grammar more often.
Put students of the same knowledge level together.

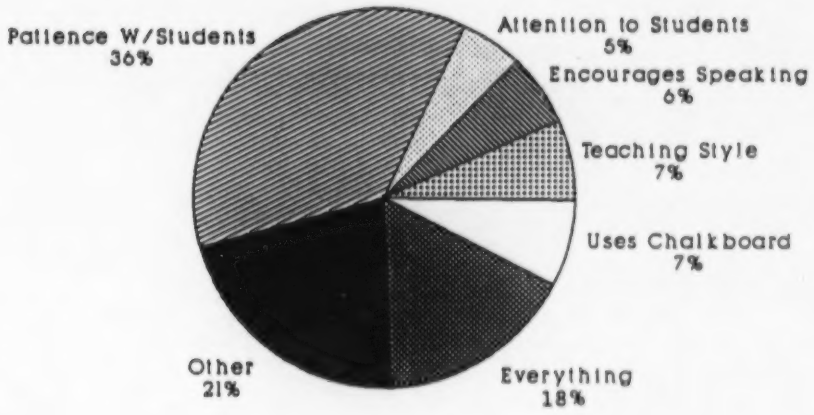

FIGURE 7. Favorite Teacher Activities/Attributes of Students Enrolled in HCC TOTAL ACCESS Program.

Student Expectations and Outcomes. In assessing an educational program, it is important to know if the program is satisfying the needs of the students. The HCC TOTAL ACCESS students were asked, "What do you want to learn" and "What are you learning"? Results showed a close fit between student expectations and learning content. Table 7 lists the expectations and content in rank order of expressed preferences. Clustering and categorizing of the open-ended responses necessitated ordinal tabulation.

TABLE 7

Student Learning Expectations and Outcomes in Order of Expressed Preference in the HCC TOTAL ACCESS Program

WHAT STUDENTS WANT TO LEARN	WHAT STUDENTS ARE LEARNING
English	English
History	History
Reading and Writing	Reading and Writing
Government	Government
Communicate Better	Communicate Better
Everything	To speak without fear

Teacher Data

Improvement of Staff Development. It is important that teachers receive adequate orientation and inservice training throughout the program. However, in virtually all adult literacy programs, most teachers work full-time at another job and are unavailable for training except at nights or on week-ends, and often, there is no time to train a teacher before he or she enters the adult education classroom for the first time. Such is the nature of adult literacy education in most programs.

According to HCC staff, because the instructors represented such a wide array of experience and preparation, it was felt that the most effective communication strategy would be to present the new materials to the staff in a large group setting. This also provided an opportunity for the teaching staff to learn of the administration's support for the program. That is the setting in which most of the training has occurred. When asked if their initial inservice training was sufficient, 60% of the teachers responded positively. When asked how the training could be improved, some of the most-mentioned responses were as follows:

Let teachers keep the training manual.
Use only certified teachers.
Provide more thorough training more often.
Allow time for teachers to share ideas and problems.
Use more visuals and less talk.
Provide specific guidelines for teaching.
Show us a sample lesson plan.
Allow teachers to observe other classes in progress.
Provide slower pace and less content in the sessions.
Develop some demonstrations of good teaching.
Provide a wider variety in guest speakers.

Following the initial inservice program, Assured Learning Centers of America provided consultative support to Houston Community College administrators and staff development experts in the use of the Opportunity USA materials. A 15-minute inservice videotape was developed by ALCA entitled, Gateway to Learning and Living, which was distributed as part of a training kit assembled by ALCA. This tape provided a capsulized understanding of the instructional scope and sequence of the new program, the philosophy undergirding its development, the most effective instructional strategies for using the tapes and print materials in the classroom, and teacher manuals providing suggested instructional strategies.

Due to the lateness of the initiation of the project, not all curricular materials could be attained until Spring, 1990. Therefore, it was decided that the Learn to Read, Another Page, and Teach an Adult to Read materials would not be distributed until early summer. Training sessions, beginning in June, would

be offered on a "menu" basis so that teachers with different types of preparation and experience could choose the ones of most interest to them. Inservice topics include: Questioning Skills; Motivation and Retention; Mentoring; ESL Strategies; and Communication Skill Development. In these sessions, teachers have an opportunity to learn how to: (1) use the new video materials and equipment; (2) enhance their teaching by incorporating new instructional techniques; and (3) organize their classes using a learning center approach which enables groups and individuals to work at their own paces. Over 20 topical inservices were developed.

It was decided that all the inservice sessions should be conducted at two or three locations where "model centers" could be established. ALCA's presenters have tried to model instructional strategies to be used in ideally arranged settings designed to allow students flexibility and independence in using the materials.

In designing over 240 hours of inservices training, several variables had to be accommodated:

(1). Make the high quality of the workshops intrinsically rewarding -- HCC's certified instructors are required to attend only 12 hours of training per year (non-certified staff must attend 24 hours). Therefore, the staff would have to be motivated to attend additional sessions on a volunteer basis.

(2). Accommodate the HCC TOTAL ACCESS work schedules of the instructors -- Because most of the instructors have other jobs, it is difficult to find common times for them to meet. Therefore, sessions would have to be offered at various times in order to accommodate a broad array of needs. Evening and Saturday sessions were most requested by teachers, according to feedback received.

(3). Promote the desired change in classroom management style -- Instructors would be encouraged to go through the video materials independently, using the same self-study learning techniques that they should be encouraging their students to employ.

(4). Facilitate provisions for make-ups and new hires -- When possible, the sessions should be filmed in order to allow the instructors who missed certain inservice sessions to borrow the tapes for individual viewing at home.

HCC, like all adult providers, has instructors that work for the college only part-time. They are not always continuously employed, and there is the problem of turnover. Any program that is staffed by a group of instructors who are not maintained over a period of at least two-to-three-years is at a disadvantage. As

a result, the following constraints must be addressed in a creative fashion.

(1). Facilities -- HCC shares facilities with the Houston School District, local churches, community centers and libraries. As a consequence, it is often difficult to develop learning centers, leaving materials out for student use when the same space has to be utilized by other instructors for different programs.

(2). Storage of materials -- Storing several hundred videotapes is challenging, but once the scheme for organization is implemented, utilization of the materials can be highly individualized. Each organization usually has its own guidelines and operational procedures for storage, and in many cases, these stipulations are outside of the purview of the College.

(3). Access to equipment -- In any urban area, theft and vandalism are major factors. Instructors must take precautions for securing the equipment. In many cases, this poses an inconvenience for the instructors because they have to "set up" every day. Mobile AV carts were ordered to reduce the work involved; each has a lockable cabinet underneath where the tapes can be stored for easy access.

(4). Teacher manual use -- In most educational settings, teacher manuals have a way of disappearing. While 1200 sets of instructor materials were provided to HCC, there is no problem in reproducing any guide that might need to be replaced. With duplication rights, the Community College can have thousands of sets of the materials printed in order to ensure that the instructors have access to the materials they need.

Assured Learning Centers of America provides inservice training to HCC on an "as requested" basis. As a result, the inservice plan is one that is developed by the College with consultative input from the company. In all cases, the College's contractors are strongly encouraged to avail themselves of the services that are offered.

Assured Learning Centers of America has provided HCC with assistance in staff training in several ways, including:

(1). funding of a full-time person to serve as a liaison with HCC;

(2). assisting the College in recruiting and retaining students by developing plans for joint implementation;

(3). developing promotional fliers explaining the services HCC offers to amnesty applicants;

(4). assisting in developing operational procedures that could be followed by HCC staff that were consistent with College and Texas Education Agency guidelines;

(5). correlating the basal textbook materials used by HCC with the new video-based materials; and

(6). providing inservices to HCC staff development personnel on methods for working with the four groups of teachers working in the program: a). Bilingual, ESL trained; b). Bilingual, non-ESL trained; c). Monolingual, ESL trained; and d). Monolingual, non-ESL trained.

Inservice Schedule. Training in the following topics was provided during the period from August, 1989 to July, 1990. Some sessions were repeated so that all staff could attend.

Measuring Student Progress: Formal and Informal Evaluations
Curriculum/Methodology/Evaluation in the Classroom
Computer Delivered ESL Instruction
Current Methodology for ELA Students
The Classroom as a Learning Center
Curriculum/OPUSA
Assessment
Duties of the Paraprofessional
ESL Methodology
Pre-Literate
Health Awareness Seminar
Student Retention
Cultural Awareness
Job Fair
Life Coping Skills
Planning Instruction
ABE/GED
Make and Take
Individualized Instruction
The Use of Supplementary Materials
The Eclectic Approach: Varied Instruction for Predicted Learner Outcomes
Have You Motivated Your Students Today?
Serving Students' Needs: New Course Projections
Teaching Strategies for Classroom Instruction
Individualized Instruction: Instructor/Paraprofessional Teams
Supplementary Materials: Suggested Lesson Activities

When teachers were asked about these workshops, 90.5% of the teachers sampled rated the TOTAL ACCESS workshops "3" or better (on a Likert scale of 1 to 5), indicating that the sessions they attended "would assist them in improving their instructional program." In addition, 95.2% rated the consultant assistance they received as "good" or excellent". Representative comments

derived from the HCC evaluation instruments included: "The workshop was helpful in reinforcing some concepts used in the program which I administer"; "Was emotionally arousing"; and "Gave positive ideas" (data provided by ALCA staff).

General Program Improvement Suggestions. Foremost in most administrators' and teachers' minds is how to improve the program to better serve the needs of the students. When asked for suggestions for program improvement, 38% of the teachers in the sample did not respond or responded that they had no suggestions at this time. Those who did respond gave a wide range of answers, some of which were the following:

Reduce paperwork.
Provide better materials.
Eliminate children's books.
Use more bilingual teachers.
Provide higher salaries.
Eliminate the aides.
Provide more supplies.
Provide more aides.
Establish a resource center.
Provide more technical courses.
Explain the goals of the program better.
Don't change the program in mid-stream.
Let teachers make and use their own tests.

Since many of these are general in nature, their specific meaning is not known. In addition, conflicting views are sometimes offered. This is the usual kind of overall response attained from a large group of teachers in adult education.

OVERALL OBSERVATIONS

(1). The use of the newspaper was more effective than expected, based upon previous research and literature about using newspapers with low-literate adults. ELA's will engage in learning activities outside the classroom if provided opportunities, i.e., lessons via newspaper or television, etc.

(2). The objectives of the HCC TOTAL ACCESS program are, to the most extent being met. ELA's have confidence that participating in an educational program will enable them to improve their life situations.

(3). Students indicate that to date, their learning needs are being met in the HCC TOTAL ACCESS program.

(4). The TOTAL ACCESS approach is more successful in recruiting ELA's than methods being used in other programs in the state.

(5). The TOTAL ACCESS approach appears to be successful in retaining students beyond the 40-hour INS requirement. However, comparable data from throughout the state were not attainable.

(6). Teachers showed some concern about the general instability of the program. However, specifics were difficult to attain in regard to that expressed apprehension.

(7). A few of the staff seem to feel that the curriculum and videotapes were not highly correlated. However, most teachers showed no concern about this and the recent changes in staff development activities should reduce much of that concern.

(8). Some teachers expressed a concern about not being able to retain the training manual from the initial inservice.

(9). ELA's do not represent the "regular" ABE student population. In other words, they are mostly male, younger, and employed. Although mostly employed, the majority hold menial and low paying jobs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1). To the extent possible, further use of newspaper, television, and/or other media should be implemented as part of the ELA program in Houston.

(2). Feasibility of utilizing other means of home study should also be investigated.

(3). The GED program for ELA's should be further developed and more students should be recruited into that program as they become qualified.

(4). The staff development program should continue in the "learning center" format with teacher involvement to the extent possible. Large group instruction should be avoided when possible.

(5). Through use of program assessors, an attempt should be made to determine <u>affective</u> changes in students in the TOTAL ACCESS Program.

(6). Through use of control and experimental sites, a determination should be made in regard to effective use of video use in the classroom. Through this research, knowledge gain and retention beyond the 40-hour INS requirement can be studied.

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